

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Bardin, Sara (DCOZ)
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2017 9:52 AM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: FW: BZA Application No. 19450 - proposed variance for Ward 3 homeless shelter

Sara Bardin

Director

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From: Neil Wasserman [mailto:nhwmail@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2017 7:17 PM
To: Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ) <Patricia.Cochran@dc.gov>; Cevalco, Jenna (EOM) <jenna.cevasco@dc.gov>; ATD DCOZ <dcoz@dc.gov>
Cc: Mendelson, Phil (COUNCIL) <PMENDELSON@DCCOUNCIL.US>; Thomas, Phil (EOM) <phil.thomas@dc.gov>
Subject: BZA Application No. 19450 - proposed variance for Ward 3 homeless shelter

Dear Zoning Board member:

This letter is written to ask for postponement of any zoning variance for the proposed homeless shelter in Ward 3, until what appear to be unjustifiable costs are analyzed and explained to the community. It appears that these costs are way out of line with standards for comparable housing projects.

According to experts in the real estate industry, ([North of \\$614: The Highest Prices Per Square Foot in DC](#)) the highest cost for luxury housing in DC is \$800 per square foot. The cost of the proposed homeless shelter is something like \$2000 per square foot. (50 units, at 325 ft.² per unit is estimated to cost \$20 million for the building, and \$30 million including parking.) Housing in the area of the homeless shelter, McLean Gardens for example, costs approximately \$400 per square foot. That means that the cost of the homeless shelter is somewhere between three and five times the cost of comparable housing. The design of this project, from a basic financial standpoint, makes no sense.

In addition, the proposed plan will disrupt the community in important ways, destroying the popular tennis courts and public gardens, and imposing other costs on the community.

I am all for development of affordable housing, and housing solutions for the homeless. But the current plan is at best ill-conceived. We should not rush into a housing plan that minimally serves the needs of the homeless, and wastes money, which could be better spent on housing in the District for those in need. This plan needs to be reviewed. The process by which extraordinary costs have been introduced into the plan also needs to be reviewed.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.19450
EXHIBIT NO.183

There are alternatives. Would it not make more sense to use \$10 million to sustain 50 additional units at other locations, and use the \$20 million remaining to support affordable housing, for 100 to 200 families depending upon the amount of the subsidy?

Spending more than \$650,000 per unit for minimally acceptable housing for the homeless population (325 ft.² per family) needs to be justified more clearly to the community. It is hard to conceive of an explanation for that type of plan. But the community is listening.

In the meantime the zoning board should postpone deciding on any variance permitting such a strangely conceived project to proceed. More analysis is needed to justify the project, or to consider alternatives that will provide more benefit to residents in need of housing solutions.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Very sincerely,

Neil Wasserman

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